

REMARKS

The present claim amendments are responsive to the Examiner's concerns noted in the Office Action.

Present Status of the Application

Claims 1, 3, 6 and 12 have been amended. Claim 7 has been previously deleted. Claims 1-6 and 8-16 are now pending in this application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the present application as amended are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC 102

Claims 1-6 and 8-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Macfee (U.S. Patent 4,755,090).

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite "bending an edge portion of the plate so as to fold part of the edge portion over and against and adjacent and consecutive part of the edge portion" (and similar amendments in claims 6 and 12). Further, dependent claim 3 has been amended to clarify that the fastening layer is applied in between the layers of the plate (similar to the subject matter recited in claims 8 and 13).

Macfee does not disclose the recited folded structures. In Macfee, fastener includes a connection portion 14 that separates leaf 13 and base plate 15 to form a U-shaped structure, which is intended to provide a spring force that exerts pressure on the screw thread. (See, e.g., col. 1, lines 66+). The screw is kept under some tension and resists dislodgement because of vibration, due to the spring action of the "U" shaped end portion 14. Hence, Macfee specifically teaches that its fastener must be a U-shaped structure that has separated layers 13 and 15 to allow

for the intended spring action. In other words, Macfee specifically teaches away from having its layers 13 against layer 15. Applicant further notes that the structure 25 shown in Fig. 5 of Macfee, is a structure separate and apart from the U-shaped fastener structure, much less corresponding to a part of the folded structure recited in the claims.

In contrast to Macfee, the present invention provides a folded structure in which the screw threading is enhanced by folding to increase, doubling for example, the thickness of the threaded section by folding a layer over and against another layer to form a multi-overlapped layer structure, as clearly shown in the figures in the specification of the present invention.

To further improve the integrity of the screw attachment, the present invention provides a fastening layer in between two separate layers of the multi-layer structure, as recited in claims 3, 8 and 13. Macfee does not provide a fastening layer in between two separate layers, but instead provides an adhesive layer on one side of a layer 15, which extends across the recessed region 17 on that layer 15 (between tabs 18a and 18b).

In view of the foregoing, the claims currently pending are patentable over Macfee.

Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments to claims 1, 3, 6 and 12 do not add any new matter. Further, such amendments do not change the original subject matter claimed, and therefore should not require further prior art search, since they merely clarify the scope of the claims originally presented. In particular, claims 1, 6 and 12 now amended clarify the folding of one layer over and against another layer, as explained above. Such recited structure has been described and illustrated in the figures in the specification of the present application. The Examiner's prior searches should have included the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 6 as amended. Pursuant to MPEP 904.03:

"It is a prerequisite to a speedy and just determination of the issues involved in the examination of an application that a careful and comprehensive search, commensurate with the limitations appearing in the most detailed claims in the case, be made in preparing the first action on the merits so that the second action on the merits can be made final or the application allowed with no further searching other than to update the original search. It is normally not enough that references be selected to meet only the terms of the claims alone, especially if only broad claims are presented; but the search should, insofar as possible, also cover all subject matter which the examiner reasonably anticipates might be incorporated into applicant's amendment. Applicants can facilitate a complete search by including, at the time of filing, claims varying from the broadest to which they believe they are entitled to the most detailed that they would be willing to accept.

In doing a complete search, the examiner should find and cite references that, while not needed for treating the claims, would be useful for forestalling the presentation of claims to other subject matter regarded by applicant as his or her invention, by showing that this other subject matter is old or obvious." (Emphasis added.)

In this case, given that the recited folded structure has been thoroughly described and illustrated in the specification, the prior art of record should be deemed to be complete to cover the folded multi-layer structure that had already been recited in the previously presented claims 1, 6 and 12. The Examiner should have reasonably anticipated the subject matter that might be incorporated into Applicant's amendments, in view of the disclosure and overall claim scope. Accordingly, no further search would be required, especially since the Examiner should have done a careful and comprehensive search.

Further, with respect to the amendment to claim 3, it recites essentially the same subject matter as claims 8 and 13, which have not been amended in the present response. Applicant respectfully submits that Macfee should not have been applied to the subject matter of claims 8 and 13 in the first place, as explained above, and therefore would not be applicable to claim 3 as now amended.

Given that independent claims 1, 6 and 12 are not anticipated by Macfee, all the dependent claims are likewise not anticipated by Macfee.

CONCLUSION

In view of all the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims pending in this application are patentable over the references of record and are in condition for allowance. Such action at an early date is earnestly solicited. **The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned representative to discuss any outstanding issues that may not have been adequately addressed in this response.**

Respectfully submitted,

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